

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-11, 13, 16-23 are pending. Claims 1 and 11 are amended. Claims 12 and 14-15 are canceled. New claims 16-23 are submitted.

In response to the Office Action, favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application are respectfully requested. The Office Action rejects certain claims as anticipated by Takizawa et al., Mizosaki et al., Tepman '744, and Orgami. Claims 5-10 and 13 were rejected as obvious in view of Takizawa and Or et al. Claims 11 and 12 were rejected as obvious in view of Takizawa and Tepman et al. '224. In addition, claims 14 and 15 were rejected as obvious in view of Takizawa, Mizosaki, Tepman '744, or Orgami, and further in view of Horiguchi. For the reasons set forth in detail below, it is submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 is amended to include features previously set forth in claim 11. In addition, new independent claim 21 includes features previously set forth in claim 12. The Office Action relied upon the Tepman '224 reference for features set forth in claims 11 and 12, however as discussed in further detail below, it is respectfully submitted that the '224 reference is not relevant to these features, and therefore, even if the '224 reference were to be combined with the other cited references, the present invention would not result.

By way of example, and not to be construed as limiting, features of claim 1 are supported by figures 9A-10C, while features of claim 21 are supported by figures 11A and 11B. Again, by way of example, in accordance with these features, *groove portions* or surface grooves 72X, 82X or 92X can be provided on a *lifter pin* 72 or 82, or an *auxiliary pipe* 98, with the grooves extending in the longitudinal direction of the lifter pin or auxiliary pipe. As discussed in the present specification, according to one of the advantages of this feature, the groove portions or surface grooves can be utilized to introduce a cleaning gas into

the guide hole to efficiently remove deposits which might occur on the lifter pin. New claim 20 further recites the feature of supplying a cleaning gas through the groove portion.

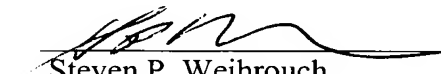
The Office Action relied upon the Tepman '224 reference in rejecting claims 11 and 12. However, the groove 38 of the '224 reference is provided in the substrate support 16A along periphery of the substrate 14. See col. 4, lines 53-55. The substrate support 16A supports the wafer, and the groove 38 has nothing to do with the lifter pins. As noted earlier, in accordance with the features of claims 1 and 21, the groove portions are formed on an outer surface of the lifter pin or an inner surface of the auxiliary pipe, with the grooves extending along a longitudinal direction of the lifter pins or auxiliary pipe. Such features are not disclosed or suggested by the '224 reference. Accordingly, even considering the '224 reference in combination with the remaining cited references, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention would not result.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is now in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance for claims 1-11, 13, and 16-23 is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, he is encouraged to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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